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PERSPECTIVES ON THE R AND D CENTER.

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AN EVALUATION OF THE WORK AND PLANS OF THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON EDUCATIONAL DIFFERENCES WAS PRESENTED THROUGH AN ANALYSIS OF A SERIES OF INTERVIEWS WITH THE POLICY BOARD MEMBERS PROJECT DIRECTORS, AND FACULTY MEMBERS OF THE HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION. THE INTERVIEWS WERE FOCUSED ON THE QUESTION OF "HOW CAN THE CENTER MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN CLASSROOMS." THE EVALUATION AND SUGGESTIONS WERE PRESENTED FROM THREE POINTS-OF-VIEW OR "PERSPECTIVES." THE FIRST PERSPECTIVE RELATED TO THE PROBLEM OF THE GAP BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY AND THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOL SYSTEMS. THE TWO GROUPS PLACED DIFFERENT EMPHASIS ON RESEARCH AND DISSEMINATION VERSUS SERVICE PROJECTS. METHODS OF CLOSING THE GAP WERE DISCUSSED. THE SECOND PERSPECTIVE RELATED TO THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE VARIOUS CENTER PROJECTS AND THE ABSENCE OF A COHESIVE NETWORK OF INTERRELATED WORK. THE THIRD PERSPECTIVE RELATED TO THE NEED FOR A DEFINITION OF THE LONG-RANGE GOALS OF THE CENTER AND THE ROLE IT MUST FILL TO ACHIEVE THOSE GOALS. (AL)

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PERSPECTIVES ON THE R & D CENTER

A Report to the Policy Board

of the Center for Research and Development on Educational Differences

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Assistant to the Executive Director
February, 1966

Introduction

This report is an analysis of a series of interviews with members of the Policy Board of the Center for Research and Development on Educational Differences, with some Center project directors, and with several others at the Graduate School of Education who also have a deep interest in how the Center can best fulfill the promise many have sensed in it. The interviews were focused on the question: How can the Center make a difference in classrooms? Before proceeding to the first of three 'perspectives' into which I have organized what was said, I feel the need for a brief explanation of the report's rationale, its structure, and its use of individual opinions.

This is not a confidential paper. It contains no secrets; it names no names. Most of the problems discussed are neither new nor highly abstruse. Yet I think many readers may find it a little surprising here and there. It will, I hope, demonstrate that some opinions and orientations are more widespread and more deeply felt than one would suspect from a description of all the activities currently being carried on under the Center's auspices. One especially discontented and vehement member of the Policy Board, whom I happened to interview early in this endeavor, predicted only half in jest that I would discover three groups: a few who were highly critical, as he was, of some things about the Center; many who might have noticed some of the same phenomena, but would excuse them by saying 'we're still in the planning stage;' and a goodly number not at HGSE who would say 'The R & D Center? What's that? Ah yes, tell me how they are doing lately!' To reduce such feelings of relative isolation and powerlessness, and thus pave the way for action, is one of my main reasons for presenting such a host of criticisms and constructive suggestions.

Furthermore, I believe that impatience and irritation with organizations are often forms of masked optimism. They frequently connote an underlying conviction that great things could be accomplished if only this or that enmeshing difficulty could be understood and overcome. This seems a productive and just way to look at the mixture of disenchantment, hope, puzzlement, vitality, and useful ideas which follows.

Structurally, the report is a series of 'perspectives' or general vantage points on the Center. Originally I planned to organize all the data from the interviews into a series of 'problems;' but the more people I interviewed, the less able I was to figure out how to divide up the material. Finally someone pointed out to me that something is a problem only if seen from certain points of view. Take for instance the frequent comment that on the whole, project directors are not very well-informed about what is going on in other projects. To some this is an organizational flaw which better channels of communication can remedy. To others it is only a symptom of an underlying and serious problem. To still others, whether or not the project directors communicate is a matter of small concern in their hierarchy of Center problems. And one researcher even thought that the limited communication was an advantage. So there is no 'communication problem' apart from the way individuals see the whole organization.

Instead of sorting the material into 'problems,' therefore, I have assembled it into 'perspec tives.' At the risk of sounding overly fanciful, let me try to make the notion of a perspective more concrete. Imagine the Center as a very large and complicated three-dimensional figure. A perspective is a vantage point--just outside it, inside it, far away from it, etc.,--from which some things loom up large, while others are hazy or distant; some things are usually shaded ominous and gloomy, while others have a more promising gleam. A perspective as used here is not a fixed set of opinions but a general way of looking within which fairly wide variation is possible.

As for the particular perspectives chosen, they are theoretical artifacts which seemed the most useful and clearest way of structuring a very diverse collection of statements and questions. They do not correspond to groups of people. On the contrary, a number of those interviewed may find opinions of theirs expressed in two or even three perspectives.

In presenting viewpoints within this structure, I have made liberal use of verbatim quotes, partly for vividness and pungency of phrase, and partly as a means of illustrating how widespread an idea is without having to identify the speakers. The statements that are not verbatim are paraphrases,

syntheses or summaries of a number of remarks, or occasionally, interpretations or opinions of my own. These I have tried to keep to a minimum so that the candor and directness which characterized the original interviews can be transmitted to the readers of this report as completely as possible.

I should like to thank all those I interviewed for their cooperation, good will, and interest, and for the considerable time which many of them took from already crowded schedules. If this intermediate document in my work of this year does prove helpful to the Center, it will be because of their willingness to participate in its creation.

First Perspective

This perspective appears first because more people said more things that fit into it than into either of the others. In the foreground, overshadowing any other problems, is a large and obvious gap between the University and the participating school systems. HGSE appears withdrawn, highly research-oriented as opposed to service-oriented, and unresponsive to the everyday needs and problems of the school systems. The conventional research-development-dissemination model suggested by the Office of Education's description of R & D Centers, whereby the results of basic research are transmuted into curriculum development, and eventually disseminated to school systems, is seriously questioned if not rejected.

With this general orientation, such questions as whether the currently funded research projects form a coherent unit, or whether there is enough communication among them, are understandably not prominent. Nor is the question of whether HGSE staff have 'answers' very prominent; more importance is attached to their genuine personal involvement in school affairs. Long-range, highly controlled research and development is not rejected as such; there is rather a sense of great imbalance in Center activities. The key words which recur in suggested remedies are 'involvement,' 'personal contact,' and 'two-way.'

I want to emphasize that this is not a schoolman's view of the R & D Center as opposed to a researcher's view. To have made that kind of division would only have widened that school-University gap which those who have this perspective feel urgently must be closed.

To elaborate on this summary, I will first present a group of quotes which make the picture of HGSE as standoffish and preoccupied with its own research concerns more vivid and explicit, then go into the various rationales and strategies suggested for closing the school-University gap: interpretation of research results for teachers, teacher-initiated research, R & D directors in the schools, and so on.

Here, then, is a barrage of remarks, each made by a different person. Since only four of those quoted are full-time schoolmen, obviously some remarks come from the very people that other remarks are meant to be about.

"The Center is not the private kingdom of Harvard."

"Up to the present, all the Center has asked us to do is give guinea pigs."

"One thing I expect is that we will lose the interest of our member school systems if we proceed in the present way. More faculty members will do more research studies in schools, but I think these studies will have less influence on changing schools--they're done <u>on</u> the schools, not <u>with</u> them."

"I can see our wanting to use them (cooperating systems) but I can't see anyone obligating themselves to repay."

"One thing that makes this (working together) difficult is the rampant snobbishness of the Harvard faculty. In general the impression I get is that the source of all knowledge and power is Larsen Hall, and everyone else should stand outside panting."

"The information is flowing all one way...The conduit isn't open wide enough."

"If this R & D Center was constructed simply to provide a more formal way for (researchers) to get at teachers, it will fail. We have a good structure but we haven't made any changes in the attitude of the basic researcher at Harvard. The needs of the systems are not making an impact at Harvard. It's not all the professor's fault--school people have not expressed their needs."

"Probably the teachers in the cooperating systems don't know a thing about the Center."

"I have the usual paranoic impression that a small clique makes the decisions in its own interests...I have no sense of participating in policy decision-making...I have a strong feeling that the Center is concerned more with "R" than "D"...We need people who are willing to accept the role of going out to serve the school rather than having the school serve them. Unless people have a sense of being respected in their involvement, they back away."

"If you want to move into a school system, sit around and listen to the teachers. See where you can be of help."

"Most school people feel that the Center is still University-oriented, and decisions tend to reflect the interests of senior faculty members, rather than those of the systems."

"There is clearly at the moment a primacy of taking, not giving. We should seriously consider whether it is not our function to provide services of certain kinds."

This list could be continued, but the general perspective should be clear enough. Naturally the long-standing tradition of usually distant and cool school-University relations, to which the Center is heir, (SUPRAD notwithstanding) cannot be altered overnight; but feeling is strong that a Center which was deliberately created as a consortium of interests should be further along than it is now in finding ways to deal with the problem.

What can it mean to serve school systems, to help them with what they see as their problems, if not to provide them with ready-made answers and packaged products labeled 'Recommended by HGSE'? One thing I discovered it can mean among those I interviewed is a different way of choosing and carrying out research projects. And here I encountered a characteristic but not fundamental difference between schoolmen and HGSE-Center staff: starting from the same sense of urgency and the same perspective, but with different training, they give different descriptions of what needs to be done. Since this difference in proposed remedies has often, I think, been mistaken for a sharp difference in fundamental perspective and commitment, it needs to be explained in more detail.

One concerned researcher put it this way: There are two styles of research in education. In 'Type A,' the essential interest is in contributing to a body of theory. You design studies, invade classrooms, withdraw and examine the data, and plan the next study. In 'Type B' you focus on a group of students. You continually change the design and tactics of your study as you observe the results. If one theory or curriculum doesn't work, you throw it out and try something else. According to this researcher, "Harvard has always cleverly managed to get involved with schools but not focused on the kids." To ever have any substantial impact on practice, researchers need to make long-range commitments to work in live classroom situations. But, he continued, "It is often said that the classroom is too messy to do research. One of the problems is that we don't have the theory to deal with messy phenomena." I get the impression, then, this type of research will call for more, rather than less, expertise on the part of those who conduct it; it is consequently not clear how great a role .

competent teachers unskilled in advanced research techniques and unfamiliar with elaborate theories of instruction could play in it. Possibly they could become conversant enough with the techniques and theories involved in particular projects to participate intelligently under the direction of a highly trained researcher.

Another approach initiated by researchers for closing the gap is embodied in the Teacher-Researcher project, often mentioned by schoolmen as one of the most encouraging of the Center's undertakings. The project team has written a series of working papers; in each of them a major theoretical concept in child development is explored to see what implications it may hold for the classroom. After the project team has carefully selected a group of teachers capable of responding creatively to the interpreted research by drawing added implications of their own, they plan a series of joint teacher-researcher papers, and eventually a book.

This project's researchers are acting as mediators, translating and interpreting and sifting a body of often abstruse-sounding material to discover what is relevant for teachers. Some of them wonder, "But then, what are you really doing to the research? How much will the finished product resemble the raw material?" Looked at another way, this difficulty in presenting research results so that they are really intelligible and meaningful to teachers might show that researchers in education are by and large using inappropriate patterns borrowed from psychology and other behavioral sciences; they have rarely first studied the problems teachers have, <u>then</u> devised suitable measurements. In this sense the teacher-researcher project indirectly demonstrates the need for more 'Type B' research, once again presumably done by experts who can devise reliable ways of measuring and describing subtle constellations of factors present in the classroom situation.

Laudable and encouraging as this project aimed at interpreting 'Type A' research and the call for 'Type B' research may be, neither completely fits the description of research growing out of teachers' needs which I heard from several schoolmen. To make this clear, let me present a schoolmen's view of the Teacher-Researcher project, followed by a description of their suggestion for closing the gap: teacher-initiated research.

Two schoolmen I interviewed were enthusiastic about the project, yet expressed concern about what would happen if the criteria for selecting participating teachers were set up by the researchers. They feared the project team would "hold the mirror up" and get someone like themselves "rather than the average good, innovative teacher." Moreover, one of them contrasted the project with another one he knew of, still in the planning stage, in which a group of forty teachers would meet for about a week with an expert in cognitive development, present classroom learning problems, and see how theory could be brought to bear on them. The organizer of this latter project is "fundamentally a schoolman. His idea is to take a practical problem and see how research bears on it." The Teacher-Researcher project team, on the other hand, wants "to take a theoretical concept and see its implications for the classroom."

Genuinely teacher-initiated research, as opposed to "Type B" research or efforts to make research intelligible to teachers, apparently ought to be judged by a different set of criteria. The several schoolmen who expressed themselves on this point, including a few with some University affiliation and research skill, were unanimous that there ought to be a 'double standard.' Far from being patronizing, this double standard would be both a "recognition of reality" and a realization that teacher-initiated research--perhaps better called 'experimentation'--provides a different sort of purpose, vitality, and impetus for change than does the work of highly trained researchers. Through it, teachers can become more informed, more enthusiastic about trying to make changes, more receptive to gradual reformulations of the problems they had originally defined. A short group of quotations describes it more explicitly:

> "The idea (coming from a school system) may be naive, unsophisticatedly described, full of fairly obvious pitfalls, but coming from a system that's in a rut,...here is the first little green stem...let's nourish the intent. In the support of this effort you will create an atmosphere--as people become more enthusiastic about submitting proposals, you can become more critical. If you really want to have an impact, you take them at their relative level of readiness.
> ...It's somewhat like writing a paper. You write the rough draft, improve the ideas, organization, etc. It could <u>grow</u> into a rigorous research project. But if you look at it in the beginning and say, What is the control group? What are the clearly stated hypotheses? And what are the instruments? you dismiss it."

"If you can get a teacher to look more critically at her function and at the whole process of learning, you're really going to get a good climate. Many are more research-conscious than we realize--we don't call it that and they don't call it that. But a good teacher is constantly trying things out."

"We're talking about the stimulation of a person in a school. It's not 'research' in the narrow sense, but look at the built-in dissemination. But research projects as the Center thinks of them are not going to be developed by the classroom teacher."

"We've become very precious and research-oriented in the allocation of funds. I suggested we give $100,000 to the schools...with different standards than those used here. Does it get a high priority? Is it something of benefit to others, even if not world-shaking? When was the last time we gave them anything?"

(The double standard)"That's OK. Then when we get involved in some more legitimate things...we will participate in a more informed way. Then the classroom teacher will not simply be used. They may even be able to contribute better feedback to the researchers."

These researchers' and teachers' approaches, responses to a similar perception of need developed by people with different sorts of training, seem to be complementary rather than in opposition. Lack of enough money to go round would seem at first sight the only reason why they could not go on simultaneously and reinforce one another. However, though 'Type B' research has a legitimate air, interpretation of basic research for teachers fits less obviously into the research-development-dissemination paradigm set up by the Office of Education, and small-scale scattered teacher-initiated research--even with considerable consultant help--seems to fit badly. The latter is also inconsistent with the June 3 policy decision to concentrate the Center's resources on a few large research undertakings. And if the teacher-researcher project were expanded to include a number of short-term teacher-researcher confrontations at different times and places, which might profit from each other's experience and the sustained work of the original team, would it be consistent with the June 3 decision and the Office of Education's desires?

Perhaps we need two sorts of financial policy: one for long-range research and development (concentrate the resources) and the other for all short-term efforts to bring the teacher and the researcher closer together

(spread the wealth and spread the findings). These scattered projects and confrontations would have a conceptual unity as variants of a single process of narrowing the teacher-researcher gap; all such projects could thus be analyzed for useful generalizations about process, regardless of--or in relation to--their great substantive variety. "This could become a major focus of Center activity."

Perhaps, also, the research-development-dissemination model is insufficient for a genuinely cooperative school-university effort. It is especially limited if interpreted to mean only 'research, <u>then</u> development, <u>then</u> dissemination.' As one person put it:

> "'Development' to me would mean the introduction of a new approach and new services. Say I had some notion for a project....We might get enough out of it to get some hypotheses that might be researchable, we might not. And we may have to say 'Do this because we have a hunch it will work.' 'D' may precede 'R' or follow 'R' or be a separate entity.'"

In addition to this objection, the standard paradigm in its most undisguised form is often unpalatable to school systems. As someone else put it, "I don't think the Center should look upon itself as something that generates a lot of great things and brings them on a silver platter to the schools. This is the guaranteed way to accomplish nothing." Efforts to get rid of the 'silver platter' image by involving teachers in the development process would very likely be more convincing if at least some teachers were concurrently encouraged to innovate and experiment on their own.

Another limitation perceived in this paradigm is that by implication, it makes a sharp distinction between research and field service, so that service does not seem a natural function of an institution devoted to research-development-dissemination. Paul Lazarsfeld's reasoning in <u>Organizing Educational Research</u> is as follows:

> "University administrators seem to have become increasingly aware of the advantage of separating research and service...
>
> It should not be concluded...that field services requested by a local client cannot contribute to basic knowledge in the given field....But the character of applied research in education and the conditions under which it is pursued seem to hamper the

> enrichment of basic knowledge....a...serious matter..is the widespread demand for field services rather than research findings... Lacking a clear idea of what constitutes research, practitioners may well confuse the latter with field services, which consist largely of consultation and social bookkeeping. This could lead them to believe that they have fulfilled their obligations to keep in touch with the frontiers of scholarly activity by commissioning a field service worker to conduct a survey of the school system or to give advice on educational trends which should be followed in order to 'keep up to date.'" (pp. 37, 40, 52-53.)

Though surely this is an unflattering description of 'service,' it presents attitudes and activities typical for school systems and universities. However, those I interviewed who are especially concerned with bridging the school-university gap seem to be asking for more activity falling midway between the two poles he defines. "Lazarsfeld's dichotomy is too sharply drawn. There's no reason why in helping the schools you can't improve their researchability and get some good research done." The thrust of Lazarsfeld's objection is that field services are too scattered, impressionistic, and filled with "former practitioners rather than academic researchers" to add much to a body of theory--i.e., to function as "Type A" research. But from this first perspective, that is hardly an objection. So from this first vantage point, it seems desirable to re-examine not only how to conduct educational research, but how to integrate it productively with activities that fall on the creative upper borderline of what is commonly called field service.

It has been shown that a perspective in which HGSE appears withdrawn and over-academic, not serving school needs, leads to a variety of plans for getting researchers to cope with the classroom and encouraging teachers to experiment. Another recurrent theme within this perspective is the need for people in specific liaison roles between HGSE and cooperating systems. Often people mentioned the lack of R & D directors in most of the cooperating systems as a crucial and significant weakness in the proposed cooperative effort. I began to feel a little as if we were all 'Waiting for Godot:' little could happen until people could be found to fill these slots, yet suitable people had not materialized, and no one seemed sure where to find them or even whether they existed. To date only one of the six slots has been officially filled. I shall present some opinions as to what such a liaison person ought to be like and why such key posts, implicit in even

the earliest planning for the Center, remain unfilled; these will be followed by suggestions for supportive, temporary, and alternative ways of creating workable school-university liaisons.

These are some characterizations of the liaison role:

"Part of this (problem) will work itself out when the Center really becomes operable, and it will when these R & D people become active, and start working with clusters of teachers, developing their tiny projects. An important role of the R & D coordinator would be to go around, start talking, observing in classrooms, find individuals who are developing classroom research projects."

"Frankly, I don't see this particular job as a very esoteric kind of job....My notion is a marriage broker, not a researcher. I'm not saying research isn't necessary to these systems....But it's not a sine qua non. I would be suspicious of a person who could only design research neatly for this job. It's low on my galaxy of attributes. A person who could be patient and listen--that's high."

"There ought to be a Center person who could sit down with a headmaster, who in turn could draw on faculty members."

"Maybe it doesn't work out in practice, but the idea would be to get someone close to (superintendents), and close to R & D, constantly figuring out in little ways how to bring R & D to the schools."

Why has the wait for R & D directors been so long? One explanation is that "Initially both Harvard and the systems set their sights too high." People reasonably well grounded in both research and teaching, who are also patient and good listeners, and willing to travel around from school to school, must be a rarity anywhere. On the other hand, intensive wide-range recruiting for these positions, setting forth a 'core' job description with several possible variations, has not really been tried. Neither has the Center made a definite attempt to train interested people already competent in either teaching or research for these roles.

For instance, as a supplement or temporary alternative to R & D directors, the Center might select a small group of skilled and innovative teachers representing elementary and secondary levels in all the cooperating systems. One schoolman suggested that these teachers, already known and respected in their home schools, could go through a specially designed,

intensive program during the summer. Through acquaintance in some depth with at least one longitudinal study in child development, severallong-rang curriculum development projects, and a number of short-term but thoughtfully designed studies, the teachers could break through the haze of mystery and remoteness that often surrounds research.

In learning about a longitudinal study currently in progress at the Center, for example, the teachers might meet for explanation, discussion, and questions with a dozen different members of the project staff, one or two at a time, in a given week. Instead of discussing research problems in the abstract, each researcher would describe a stage or problem as it was embodied in this particular study: compiling a bibliography of previous literature, choosing a sample, devising and validating test instruments, and so forth. With curriculum development, the teachers could explore what the assumptions behind the project were, what the field testers looked for in student reactions and achievements, why and how the materials were revised, etc. In addition, if there were a modest curriculum center, teachers could examine recent materials in their special fields. Center partners WGBH and ESI could play an active role by arranging to introduce the group to the inner workings of selected ongoing projects in curriculum and communications systems.

Such an initiation of course would not be intended to train the teachers in actual research design, but rather to give them some sensitivity to the problems and activities of the researcher, and to think constructively about what sorts of classroom and school problems they already knew about would be amenable to small-scale innovation and experimentation. In addition, they would have a host of personal contacts among HGSE researchers, on whose experience they could draw in a friendly, non-formal fashion. Perhaps some of their small projects could eventually become "Type B" research. During the school year the teachers could be released from classroom responsibility to have systematic, extensive conferences with other teachers at their home school and perhaps one or two others in order to encourage promising-looking ideas. As they grew within this new job role, many might wish to return to HGSE for another summer or full year, in order to obtain more rigorous and specialized training.

One added advantage of such a pilot training program is that it would give many researchers, particularly those whose projects may have "nothing to disseminate" in the form of valid results for several years, a chance for direct contact and free exchange of ideas with classroom teachers; yet it would not take much time from any one person's work. In fact two such groups of teachers could probably be moved through this type of summer program, one a week or so later than the other, without disrupting the pace of anyone's research.

Another temporary or supportive approach which was suggested would be to use HGSE doctoral candidates for part-time liaison roles. The school systems could decide what sort of parallel, short-term training program could best introduce them to the complexities of local conditions. Then they could be assigned to one or two schools and spend a preliminary period listening and becoming acquainted with everyone. Customarily a number of doctoral candidates have had part-time jobs supervising M.A.T. candidates. Considering that the alternative system of resident supervision has been introduced, and that in any event the number of M.A.T. students is likely to be reduced according to the plan of the Scheffler Report, a new liaison role for doctoral students could be introduced as an alternative to supervision.

To increase personal contacts still further, it has been suggested that the Center staff ought to become directly involved with middle-level administrators--principals, department heads, and supervisors. What ought to happen? Suggestions include: using a series of small-group meetings with selected Center Staff intended to create more open attitudes toward innovation and experimentation; more substantively oriented, periodic group meetings with particular Center researchers whose current research interest the administrators can understand and share; and conferences directly related to small innovative projects which the Center is supporting within their schools.

In short, the need for personal contact dominates this perspective.

> "Personal contact is the way you make friends and influence people. It's the way you improve a school system. Bulletins, directives, memoranda, reports--we are inundated....If we could only slenderize the written materials and somehow or other accentuate the personal contacts of researcher and teacher,--not an artificial contact but a continuing thing, so that when he goes into the classroom he is regarded as a partner and not as 'One of those observers from Harvard.'"

One final suggestion for bridging the school-university gap is indirectly also a way of genrating more personal contacts, but primarily a source of information: a curriculum center. Hardly a new idea for the Center, this proposed collection of instructional materials is almost always mentioned in the same breath as the Clearinghousein planning documents and early Executive Committee meetings. But though the two were seemingly as inseparable as Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the Clearinghouse came into being and the curriculum center has not. A large, comprehensive, and elaborate center will in all propability be part of the proposed REL (Regional Educational Laboratory). But even so, the R & D Center might be well advised to assemble and house a modest center of its own, accesible to all teachers in the cooperating systems and all HGSE staff and students. The space difficulties in Longfellow are not insurmountable; the library budget has recently increased; several professors have collections of new curriculum materials which they might be gald to have available for more general use. Since the focus of the Center is on individual and cultural differences, its curriculum center might specialize in new materials designed for use with culturally different or otherwise disadvantaged students: for instance, the materials produced by Gateway English, the ETS high-school geography project, and ESI's pre-college enrichment program.

Second perspective

This perspective is a view from within. In the foreground are the relations among Center research and development projects currently in progress. While a number of separate projects appear in satisfactory internal condition, emphasis by those who have this perspective is on the need for more interconnectedness at the conceptual level, and more cohesiveness and joint effort at the personal level. From this second vantage point, which we might call 'inside looking out,' the relations with Center partners ESI, WGBH, and the State Department of Education, and also with NESDEC, NEEDS, and various specialized centers at the University, occupy the middle range of vision. Greater clarity and more action are needed to improve the picture here. Dissemination to school systems, though felt to be vital in the long run, is in the background for two reasons: First, "We have nothing to disseminate," probably the single most repeated statement I encountered; second, there is some feeling that when project results do become available, dissemination activities ought mainly to be carried on by a separate arm of the Center specially skilled in bringing about change in schools. The key words describing what ought to be are "cooperative effort" and "responsibility: the key words describing what exists are "prima donnas," "stars," and "everyone in his own shop."

Clearly this view from within is possible only for those who are in a position to know the inner workings of HGSE, that is, Center researchers and HGSE administrators. Schoolmen seem not to have been well enough informed about these inner workings to express opinions about them. But I want to emphasize again that this is not a researcher's perspective as opposed to a schoolman's. When interviewed, some researchers responded mostly within the first perspective; some mostly within this one; and some 'shifted gears' about evenly among all three.

From this point of view, the lack of sufficient cooperative effort by the researchers is sometimes attributed to the way the Center was created, sometimes to the way new projects are added, and sometimes to certain traits which the HGSE faculty shares with many others in the academic community.

When the site visiting team came on May 27, 1964 to examine facilities and make inquiries which were to help them decide whether to fund the Center,

they were assured that "we'll all pull together to make the Center work." Retrospectively, this was far too sanguine an assertion, unconsciously tongue-in-cheek even at the time it was made. According to one senior faculty member the Center was "pasted together" by asking the senior faculty "'Who'll volunteer?' ...The original document was kind of a hodgepodge. It lacks a theme, it lacks a perceptible shape." Another said it was "...an effort to create alliances out of fragmented interests."

These are harsh words to utter about an institution that is partly one's own creation. Let us consider what serious practical and attitudinal difficulties have stood in the way of a genuinely cooperative effort by a cohesive group.

The Center came into being partly because a few of its 'founding fathers,' in key positions at HGSE, in Massachusetts, and in Washington, were bothered that the University had had so little impact on school systems. They were also disturbed by "an occasional 'keeping up with the Joneses' effect, and the spreading of fads" in local school systems, and by "the original direction of Harvard...in the direction of the affluent community." Starting from the already functioning SUPRAD group, the constellation of Center members came to include six public school systems, the National Association of Independent Schools, the State Department of Education, ESI, WGBH, NEEDS, NESDEC, and an expanded Harvard component. Before these assorted participants became involved in the Center, relations among them ran to all extremes including bracing competition, close involvement and interdependence, mutual disdain and suspicion, and no relation at all. It might have been expected that the Graduate School of Education, as the center of operations, could provide that needed example of unified purpose and joint effort which could give direction and structure to the whole undertaking.

However, such a unified focus is easier to discuss than to achieve. The title "Center for Research and Development on Educational Differences" is certainly both broad and vague. After reading the original proposal, one might easily argue that too vast an area had been sketched for any reasonable person to expect that it could be covered systematically and intensively, with each project fitting naturally into a conceptually unified scheme. But when it was suggested early in the planning that the special problem area

of the Center be a narrower one, "the senior faculty said 'fiddle de dee.' They said, 'if you want the first rate talent, and if you have a narrow harness, we won't get them. If you want to get these strong horses, you have to let them run where they want.'" In other words, realistically a top-flight researcher is more likely to look for the best way to get support for his next project than to change his research plans on the basis of what an institution needs to round out its program, or fill in gaps. Besides, there was a feeling that the problem area could be stretched somewhat to accomodate faculty members who wanted to be part of the Center.

It might seem, then, that administrative action ought to be directed toward filling in conceptual gaps in the research and development program, so that key issues raised by one project would 'feed' naturally into another. Some parts of the program are already set up so that this can happen, but others are less unified.

> "Initiative ought to come from the Executive Committee in laying out what tasks need to be done in order to fulfill our obligation. In the past we have assumed that professors will come up with 'Zee Grand Ideas.' We have all this government money in order to answer certain questions and solve certain problems, so the Executive Committee ought to make sure all the relevant tasks get done, rather than just waiting to see what proposals come to it."

This sort of remedy was suggested in several forms, including stronger action by the Executive Director and stronger action by the Dean.

However, such solutions would apparently be in conflict with certain prevailing attitudes and stereotypes:

> "This is highly unlikely because it goes against the whole Harvard way. Deans just don't tell senior faculty what to do, it's not cricket."

> "If we had a second-rate faculty, you...could be much more prescriptive, get lots of cohesion. The challenge is getting first-raters. Really good people won't let the administrative types tell them what to do. The less able and less secure are more likely to accept....We do have a strong faculty. We also know that any time they want to pull out and get money on their own to do just what they want, they can. So we've got to be a little Machiavellian and know what people are interested in."

> "We haven't seen too much active pooling of resources in the Center. ...(We) have said: Let it happen as it will, don't force it. You don't accomplish it by knocking people's heads together."

In my effort to understand this touchy situation, it has struck me as a mixture of a dilemma and a self-fulfilling prophecy. If it is assumed that a first=rate researcher will not let administrators tell him what to do, then naturally one way to act like a first-rater is not to let anyone tell you what to do. Then, if this line of thinking is pushed to an absurd but logically consistent extreme, anyone who agreed to fill a gap by doing research that needed to be done, but was not what he cared most about, would be not a flexible altruist but a 'second-rater .' Yet to judge from what I have heard, it is often the 'first-raters' themselves, for whose benefit and enticement the scope of the Center's problem area was made so large and amorphous, who express the need for a more unified framework:

> "We...have sunk back into the system of stars, prima donnas, separate facilities, etc."
>
> "Our faculty is incapable of being trained--they have a wonderful ability to learn, but on their own terms."

For many of them it is not enough that their own projects may be proceeding quite satisfactorily, nor even that they have a productive working relationship with a few other project directors whose work they esteem and whose interests they share; they feel that the Center's whole research effort should have more unity in conception and purpose.

There seems to be a value conflict between the traditional independence of the University professor, often inappropriately described as 'academic freedom,' and the not very clear demands of a new situation for cooperation and group effort. As regards the first, certainly HGSE has a less extreme case of it than the graduate faculties in the Yard. Friends assure me that there is at least one department where several senior professors, each surrounded by a flock of graduate-student disciples, barely talk to each other or acknowledge the legitimacy of each other's theories, let alone cooperate. Less severe cases of this typically academic disease can be found all over Harvard and at other 'status' schools--together, of course, with counterexamples of faculties that seem relatively immune.But perhaps in a faculty where a professor's closest professional ties might realistically be with a handful of like-minded scholars scattered around the country, or even the world, the "star system" is less of a disadvantage. It seems a poor model, however, for a professional school which proposes to intervene,

in some concerted and significant fashion, in the educational development of the metropolitan area where it is located. Yet this model seems to affect the way many people act, react, and make decisions at the Center, even those who are made most distressed by the results.

> "It's a well-known problem that the HGSE faculty...has imitated what is thought to be the model of the Yard."

"Cooperative effort" by the Center staff, as opposed to "everyone in his own shop," is also difficult to arrive at because the Center as a research institution does not have clear boundaries. First, research under Center auspices is only part of the larger body of research going on at HGSE. As such, it tends to blend in with the rest so that the Center seems like just one more device for funding. One key person went so far as to say that "The R & D Center as an entity doesn't make sense. The Committee on R & D is more important than the Executive Committee because it is concerned with research throughout the Ed school." Such a view underscores how difficult it is for those who see things within the second perspective to move further toward collective effort and group cohesiveness for Center staff. Second, the Center staff is not a clearly defined group. Many people work on Center projects half-time, quarter-time, even three-eighths time, while concurrently teaching, completing a degree, or doing a variety of other things. Third, it has no building all to itself. No wonder the Center as an entity at HGSE is a very hazy concept.

> "We mustn't make the fallacy of misplaced organization. One mustn't imagine that there's a Center which exists in the sense that, as Bertrand Russell put it, St. Paul's Cathedral exists. It is relationships between people, a set of opportunities missed or taken....It's no more real than a course in a course catalog, which is different for every student."

Some steps have been taken and others can be taken, however, to make the best of this obviously difficult situation. There have been attempts, some more successful than others, to organize meetings at which each project director could speak briefly about the current state of affairs within his project. One of the largest projects has assembled an informal group which

> "...consists of anybody who is interested in this age range. For example we had a meeting last Wednesday to which 35 people came. (It is) an attempt to integrate the ...program with the grad school at large. The functions of this group are to keep them informed, stimulate interest--also to ask for help on policy issues....It provides a setting where a speaker or particular relevance to the...project can speak for a less limited audience."

The hope was expressed that other projects can also establish better communication and elicit reactions from a larger audience. One researcher suggested a newsletter containing "in-progress reports for fellow researchers and other interested parties" on the assumption that "Meetings, where everyone gives a short pitch on what he is doing, are not a good means of doing this, a newsletter is more efficient, timewise." Perhaps the recent quarterly report has helped to perform this function. And finally, it is very likely that the proportion of full-time, long-term Center staff will increase.

The problem raised by the confused middle range of this perspective can be stated very simply: What <u>is</u> the Center's relationship with all these groups, and how can it be made first of all more understandable, and second, more active? "There is not a clear idea of what our involvement with ESI, WGBH, etc., ought to consist of. There are possibilities but there never seem to be any definite plans. It's kind of window-dressing, but probably a good thing." "Is there an accomodation between the Center and NESDEC?" And what about all the other Centers in and out of HGSE that the R & D Center supposedly has a relationship with? What about the Center for the Study of Education and Development? the Center for Research in Careers? the Center for Cognitive Studies? and so on. Who at the R & D Center ought to be having what sort of relationship with which of these many organizations? How should information be flowing back and forth? Precisely how can the Clearinghouse best serve this need for information flow, along with its other activities? Obviously, merely stating that two institutions are engaged in related activities, or inviting an official of one to sit four times a year on the Policy Board of the other, will not in itself (as one such official pointed out) produce a productive relationship. Clear answers to many of these questions ought to be reached.

Readers may have noticed that in the first perspective, not even two pages are devoted to setting forth the main problem, and most of the rest of the space is taken up with proposed solutions. In this second perspective, the picture is just the reverse, with more extensive analysis of the main problem, and very little in the way of constructive suggestions. For some reason obscure to me, this was indeed the distribution of the interview data. It contrasts interestingly with the assurance given me by one researcher that "The interfaculty problem...is more easily soluble than the other (teacher-researcher gap)."

Third perspective

The second perspective was a view from within, this one is a view from afar. In the foreground are two great question-marks: 'What do we really know?' and 'What are our goals?' The distant flurry of activity which constitutes the Center is examined in the long shadow of these two queries. Very little of this activity appears significant.

Once again, this perspective is not the monopoly of a few people. Its nearest equivalent in everyday life is that moment of questioning, more common by temperament and training in some people than in others, when one pauses in the middle of a task to wonder 'What's it all about?' and the universe sends back no clear reply. It is a searchingly critical vantage point, difficult and perhaps not desirable to maintain daily from nine to five, but important to assume fairly often.

Though the criticisms in perspectives one and two may have seemed severe, there was an underlying assumption that if only certain gaps could be closed, or certain types of cooperation achieved, much that was valuable would happen. This perspective, however, questions that underlying assumption by focusing on the paucity of substantive knowledge and the lack of clearly understood purposes within the whole field of education, and in particular within the Center. Since the Center is a complex organization, this viewpoint has an alternate form: wondering whether we have sent out organizational feelers in all the necessary directions, whether the pattern of alliances and interrelationships that has been set up is the desirable one. The key words and phrases are "evaluation," "re-thinking the whole process," and once again, "We have nothing to disseminate."

In the second perspective, this last statement meant that a number of the Center's long-range research or development projects will not have final results for some years. In that sense, it is an accurate statement of fact. But in this perspective, "We have nothing to disseminate" is a judgment. It encompasses not only current research-in-progress but the whole state of education as a discipline:

"I have a definite bias about dissemination--I don't believe in it. So much stuff about change and planned change and resistance to change--the prior question is what. Give me one thing that's good and let's talk about dissemination....

I'm all for this sort of climate business, and living with intangibles, but then let's say that that's it....We get in the posture of presuming answers and then shipping them out. In the thirties people were flying all over the country talking about junior high schools. Now New York is getting rid of them....

Tentativeness and insisting on evidence is what we should disseminate."

"We are talking not so much about how to change...schools, but how to change schools of education....Whenever I have asked a specific question, I haven't gotten an answer....I ask from the point of view of a consumer....Again and again I find a huge gap....If our schools of architecture were run on this basis, we couldn't build buildings."

"Dissemination is not a problem at the level of dependable knowledge, since we don't have it, but at the level of informed information."

"I don't think we have anything to disseminate....Even if you put all this trivia (i.e. current projec ts) together, you wouldn't have very much impact. There's insufficient scope in viewing education as an institution."

It is often an odd sensation to hear impassioned statement like these coming from individuals obviously working hard and with dedication at various educational endeavors. Apparently willingness to 'step back' and assert that in the last analysis, we don't have the answers, does not cut the ground out from under people or reduce them to a state of torpor. It seems to have a positive, not a destructive, effect.

Questioning the state of dependable knowledge in education goes hand in hand with questioning the validity of current techniques for evaluation. Having commented on the deficiencies of evaluation instruments, some go on to place a high value on "the judgment of experienced people," "informed information," "intuition and subjective evaluation...gut reactions."

A more common reaction among those I interviewed is to stress the need for more rigorous evaluation. If, as educational change expert Matthew Miles asserts, "educational innovations are almost never installed on their merits," educators are at least partly to blame.

"School people are confused by developments; there's no place they can go and be sure of getting the cards on the table."

> "To hand out a piece of curriculum development without evaluation is like handing out a car without an operator's manual. The products will sell themselves only insofar as they have some credibility. Maybe you hand the evaluation over to some independent agency."

(Parenthetically, I ought to note that many Center staff members heard this call for more rigorous evaluation over and over from textbook publishers at the recent Seminar on Industry and Education. Schoolmen, the education industries, and researchers seem agreed on this point.)

One person I interviewed pointed out that evaluation is inconclusive even for innovations that have generated wide support and enthusiasm among educators and teachers. Whereas someone interviewed earlier felt that team teaching had had a greater impact than most research because it had really gotten school administrators to look closely at teachers' schedules, this person asked, "What are the results of that long look? Freeing people to look at different abstractions is fine, but then what?" He felt that perhaps after ten or fifteen years of rigorous, controlled testing under a variety of conditions, we would know just what team teaching or any other administrative re-organization or new curriculum was good for. Good ideas tend to be "prostituted prematurely." Widely-praised contract correcting came in for similar comments: "Did the teachers plan more? Did the teacher lose something very precious by not correcting those papers?" Someone else hazarded a guess that many teachers used the time released by contract correcting "for more coffee, probably. In providing the technology for people to do things more efficiently, we need to re-train people to use the time another way." In both cases the speakers were not singling out these innovations for particular criticism, but rather using them as examples of our generally tenuous ability to evaluate.

Evaluation is, of course, a meaningless term apart from some notion of objectives--a point not always recognized in the cries for 'more and better evaluation' so frequently heard in educational circles. Questioning evaluation therefore blends into questioning purposes. Does the Center as a whole have a well-thought-out set of objectives to which it is committed: convictions as to what schools ought to be like, what personal and intellectual qualities education ought to promote? The organization clearly includes many separate individuals with strong convictions and many projects

with definite, well-defined objectives, but seems to lack an overall sense of purpose and direction.

> "We lack the feeling of mission. We aren't a bunch of soldiers trying to capture that flag over there."
>
> "...certain ideas you see in effect...are not guided in fact by ideas about the purpose of education, but about how you bring about change. It's as if the medical profession were devoted to making the profession more attractive...instead of curing people....
> What we have to be governed by in education is objectives. As (a researcher) said at a meeting last year, we have most of the answers, what we don't have is the questions."
>
> "What if every program was fantastically successful? Suppose we could make underprivileged Negro kids as teachable as middle class whites? So they grow up to be (like the) white (kids--a less than inspiring model.) We only aggravate the problem."

If one side of this coin is a lack of agreed-on, explicit goals around which research and development can be oriented, the other is the implicit value component in social science concepts often assumed to be objective. "Do the child development concepts carry with them a value loading? Where is that issue going to be discussed?--whether or not the educational change implied by the concept is a desirable change." How much of a middle-class bias does the concept of Achievement (n Ach) incorporate? Moreover, to what extent does the prominence of certain research areas at a given time come to mean that a high value is to be placed on that sort of development? "We have undue focus on the cognitive realm." Educators must be especially watchful that traits desirable for certain types of study and intellectual development are not projected onto the total personality, as in this excerpt from Joyce's otherwise admirable book, Strategies for Elementary Social Science Education:

> INTERDEPENDENCE. In the most mature stage of conceptual development, a person possesses the most complex and flexible system of concepts, which enables him to adapt most easily to difficult and stressful situations. The interdependent person does not see conflicts of interest as necessary or long-lasting; he is less emotional about interpersonal difficulty....When faced with a difficult problem, he tends to be able to suspend judgment while seeking information that will make a decision more rational. In short, the stage of inter-dependence is the desirable one."

This tendency for concepts to become value-laden and thus become prescriptive rather than descriptive, in areas far more complex than those for which they

were originally intended, is often noticeable. Just as an example, a recent plan for classifying teachers along a continuum, previous to in-service training, divided them into five levels: managerial, material-centered (technician), innovative, analytical, and creative--supposedly in order of ascending worth. Such schemes are a poor substitute for a genuine hierarchy of educational goals.

Of all the Center's projects, the Shadow Faculty is most clearly set up for making "an effort to ask fundamental questions." Yet just as a school's language development program is far less effective if only the English teachers are thinking about it and working on it, so the process of continually re-thinking and clarifying goals ought to go on throughout an institution. The Shadow Faculty alone cannot create coherent purposes for the Center as a whole.

Within the group I interviewed, this third perspective was more typical of University people than of schoolmen. Not that the schoolmen therefore care less about goals, but "out on the day-to-day firing line with the day-to-day pressures...facing the realistic problems of the city," so many things obviously need improving, so many practical problems and hazards must somehow be dealt with, that the problem of where it is all leading becomes obscured: "...the superintendent...just doesn't have time to think in a sensitive and intelligent fashion about where the system is going." This last comment might well be applied to administrative decision-making at the Center as well: "we all (on the Executive Committee) react to the pressures of the moment, rather than sitting back and looking at where we're going."

All this talk about lack of dependable knowledge and clearly defined goals should not be taken to mean that expertise in education has nothing to offer. The field, after all, is not wallowing in a state of complete bankruptcy. It is rather that uncertainty prevails about the conceptual and evaluative foundations of the discipline, though we do possess a great deal of useful information, a number of productive theories, and even some generally accepted goals.

The organizational form of this perspective is more concerned with the Center's long-range strategies, alliances, and emphases. Four subjects for speculation and concern are: the Center's involvement in urban, as opposed to suburban, schools; the relation of the Center to the proposed REL (Regional Educational Laboratory); its links with educative institutions and functions outside of schools; and its reliance on the influence of research findings to bring about change.

Whether the Center, and indeed all of HGSE, ought to become far more deeply and permanently committed to the problems of the inner city--and if so, how?--is a complicated and hotly debated issue. Let me step briefly outside the context of this report to remark that of all comments I have heard about what the Graduate School of Education ought to be doing, the most extended and heated are usually on this topic. They come from many sources: HGSE students, junior faculty, concerned laymen, clergymen, faculty at other institutions of higher learning in greater Boston, and even faculty at schools of education in other major cities. 'Why isn't Harvard sponsoring an Institute for Teachers of Disadvantaged Youth?' 'What is Harvard going to do about training teachers for urban schools?' 'How many professors at the Ed school really know anything about slum schools?' and so on.

Of course a good case can be made on the other side too. Large, bureaucratic urban systems are not usually in a position to provide the same extreme flexibility and freedom to operate as innovative, affluent suburbs. In one recent episode, a researcher originally planned on using a particular urban school setting for a phase of his study. According to the administrator involved, "It was too much bother for him because I couldn't OK what he wanted right off. By the time I OKd it through the right channels, (he) had taken it somewhere else." Here, in microcosm, is part of a complex problem. Rather than going into the whole problem in further detail, I wish merely to emphasize that there are rapid developments and strong sentiments outside the Center that ought to be considered in setting policy on this issue.

Less charged with emotion, but equally complicated, is the question of the Center's relation to the proposed REL. This much larger regional

consortium may take on many of the base-broadening, direct-involvement functions which have been proposed from time to time for the Center. Two of these are in-service training of sizable groups of teachers, and interaction with the nearby state colleges.

> "The Center has a more narrow focus, both in terms of the projects it undertakes and the people it involves. This is as it should be.... (Involvement with state colleges) is not necessarily a function of the Center. I would hope the proposed REL would provide the vehicle. I think definitely that it should happen. It's inconceivable to me that Harvard would continue to have as little relation as it does."

> "The REL could be more of a pooling of resources than the Center probably ever would....There are some sensible arguments for establishing a place not recognizably Harvard, or ESI, or XYZ, where teachers can get exposed in a more or less orderly way to what's available.... We think if real change is going to happen, we've got to get to the kids who are going to be teachers....A teachers' view of HGSE might be 'They;re not interested in us, they're training superintendents.' This must be dispelled--more easily by the REL."

Exciting possibilities being developed by WGBH might also be most appropriately attached to the broadly-based REL: for instance, a wired network connecting a large number of classrooms in public school districts in a round robin, two-way set-up; or open-circuit systems for one-way dissemination followed by live telephone conferences.

However, the REL is not a working reality yet and the Center is. Moreover, though the long-range future of the REL looks very bright and ground-breaking, there is little reason to think that in the early stages it will not have many of the problems the Center has, and a few more besides:

> "...the REL, if it's going to work, implies commitment in terms of people....One reason the REL discussions are not the easiest ones in the world is that everyone realizes they'll have to give up something to this beast....Some people see the REL as a great big thing. It may get too institutionalized and lose one of its selling points, if we have to encumber it with administration."

So, it might be worthwhile for the Center to send out preliminary feelers to the state colleges, or begin experimenting with in-service training for teachers of culturally different youth, in such a way that these activities might be partially or completely transferred to the REL at some future time, with a few of the kinks ironed out. Meanwhile, concerned

Center staff members could be having valuable experiences which would also strengthen the eventual ties between the two organizations.

The third of these strategic concerns can be put this way: interaction with school systems and education industries is not the only way to think of bringing about change. On the national level, "Dissemination can affect broad issues of national policy by affecting the decision-makers. Don't judge research solely on the basis of whether teacher behavior is changed." Some researchers may feel that they can have maximum impact on education by writing background papers or supplying material in some other fashion for key policy-makers.

There is a very different way of getting away from a fixation on school systems. One assumes that the usual dissemination model is

> "a product-selling model. You put on demonstrations, etc. We could help in this way, but we're selling the wrong model. Educative functions should be all over. We're so short-sighted that we see educative functions only within schools. R & D is feeding the wrong model.
>
> I've come to the conclusion that school is the wrong way to look at the problem. You try to involve young people in educative functions... There are two views of dissemination: There's dissemination from the point of view of a community as a stratified society providing services--you look at power structures, etc. Then you can look at a community in a more organic way, in which case 'dissemination' would be construed as providing various agencies within the community with an opportunity to acquire technologies and ways of thinking about goals....
>
> What I'm talking about is an active, aggressive role for the University, not the...approach of identifying power structures... but points in the community where you might get people excited about the options they might recognize, (give them) resources for exercising options, and ways of evaluation."

Of course with all these suggestions for different or additional strategies, there is the practical question of how far the Center can and ought to spread out its activities, given its present budget, staff, and already very large problem area.

The last strategic consideration comes, as it were, full circle as a critique of the main current of thought in the first perspective. Is increased contact between researchers and teachers a plausible way to

expect noticeable change to come about? When research does have impact, how does it usually happen?

> "Real leverage for changing...schools is brought about through political means, not by disseminating R & D Center results.... By comparison, what we could do even if working optimally is a drop in the bucket."

> "Research and its dissemination has a marginal impact and operates in one of two ways: (1) It provides a set of ideas to a committed man. The Rickover type--he was convinced by research that nuclear subs were possible. It's a way of providing an eccentric the ideas and data to bolster his own ideas. It's chancey--there's no way to produce these eccentrics....Each organization needs a 'madman.'... (2) The other way research operates to affect behavior is to provide a rhetoric, a set of general ideas that become the attentive elite's 'received wisdom.' These general ideas provide the agenda for action....
> It's a matter of timing. Dissemination is not of value unless it's to the right people at the right time. This is hard to know.

One might argue that even if this is a description of past actualities, it does not exhaust future possibilities.

The third perspective is very un-unified compared with the first or even the second. Whereas in the first I tried to point out that people were seeing the same problem in the foreground and suggesting a wide variety of remedies, and in the second they saw more or less the same problem and attributed it to different causes, in this perspective sharp differences in proposed strategies and goals become more apparent. As a result, the Center may run the danger of being like the knight in Stephen Leacock's story who came charging down from the tower and rode off in all directions.

Fourth Perspective

This is a historical perspective. It is included for those who might be interested in detecting signs of present Center problems in past deliberations.

Excerpts are included from the USOE instructions for applying for an R & D Center, from memoranda and minutes of SUPRAD Board meetings before the proposal was submitted and funded, and from minutes of Executive Committee meetings since then. No excerpts from the lengthy proposal itself are included, as one of any value for the above purpose would be too long for the scale of this report; however, it is readily available.

These excerpts are not a balanced selection from the documents, but instead were chosen because they dealt with

(a) the nature of school-University relations, including the relation of research to improved practice;
(b) the way the HGSE component of the Center was assembled; or
(c) the purposes and direction of the Center.

They are presented in chronological order without any comment, so that readers can draw whatever conclusions they please, keeping in mind that minutes of meetings and official memoranda are an incomplete picture of past events.

For present purposes, it makes little difference who made what statement. So for the sake of consistency, and also to avoid any unnecessary intrusion of personalities into the issues, letters have been substituted for names except when the author of a document is indicated.

I. USOE Instructions for Research and Development Centers

"Research and development centers are designed to concentrate human and financial resources on a particular problem area in education over an extended period of time, in an attempt to make a significant contribution toward an understanding of, and an improvement of educational practice in, the problem area. More specifically, the personnel of a center will:

1. Conduct basic and applied research studies, both of the laboratory and of the field type.

2. Conduct development activities designed to translate systematically research findings into educational materials or procedures, and field test the developed products.

3. Demonstrate and disseminate information about the new programs or procedures which emerge from the research and development efforts. These activities may include demonstrations in a natural, or operational, setting, the preparation of films, tapes, displays, publications, and lectures, and the participation in symposia and conferences."

II. Background Material for a Discussion of the Advisability of Applying... (For Discussion at the Senior Faculty Meeting, December 16, 1963)

"Major implications...

(4) Coordination--Is the Faculty sufficiently in favor of the model proposed by the Office of Education that they will lend every effort to establishing and maintaining a unified and well-coordinated venture which involves responsibility for direct, active, and close collaboration with the schools and the State Department of Education? Can the different research and development interests of Faculty members and their departments be melded into a unified and systematic program without either undue sacrifice or the unwise and unwelcome distortion that could result from efforts to marry incompatible methods and interests?

(5) External relationships--Is the University willing to work out the requisite external relationships, so that the best that now exists can be applied and the best that is discovered made readily available? What safeguards have to be built into those arrangements to protect the schools, the University, the State Department, and the scholars and researchers?

III. Memorandum from Wade Robinson to President Pusey and Senior Faculty Members, HGSE, January 20, 1964

"(1) In the December meeting of the Senior Faculty, the decision on the advisability of applying...was deferred until more detailed information could be gathered and given to the senior members. Among other things, they wanted to know more about the following:

....(c) Which members of the faculty were interested in affiliating with a "center" and what were their research and development interests?

(d) What would the nature and extent of the University's involvement be with the schools and the State Department of Education?

(e) To what extent would the work of individual faculty members be subordinate to some central aim of the 'center?'

(f) To what extent would the valuable time of scholars and researchers be usurped from their own concerns to such activities as running demonstrations and disseminating practices?"

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"...development and dissemination activities which flow from the work of faculty members will be conducted by separate personnel, for the most part,... These people may be teachers, administrators, subject experts, scholars, graduate students, guidance counselors, what you will--many of whom will have to be in close touch with the basic and applied research work."

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"(3) By establishing working relationships with these organizations, the Center could remedy a glaring present deficiency in the University through establishing a comprehensive and thoroughly documented curriculum information center or division within the Center itself."

IV. Minutes of SUPRAD Board meetings just before and after the proposal was submitted

"In discussing the general idea of the Research and Development Center, (A) reported that there seemed to be two general views about the nature of the relationships that ought to obtain between school systems and the University. The first of these, put forward by some members of the faculty, called for a relationship pattern which would have the researcher in fairly direct control of a total school or a total sub-segment of a school, so that research and development activities taking place within the school could be under experimental control. The second general view of the relationship pattern, one more like that prevailing presently in SUPRAD, would be for the research and development activities to be somewhat separated, in that the researcher would not necessarily be expected to be responsible for development and dissemination, leaving this up to the schools and the State Department." (January 14, 1964)

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"(B) brought up the point that the "diversity" title is not really representative of the aims of the Center or of the school in establishing the Center. In his view, the Center would really be a demonstration of the procedures and organization that would be required by which a research and development minded school of education in concert with local school systems can have a more direct influence on schools and school life. In (C's) view, though this statement of general purposes was probably correct, it left out one of the most important purposes of such an organization which was...the provision of the necessary coordination so that the Center for Field Studies and other organizations within the Graduate School of Education and the University could be coordinate units." (February 7, 1964)

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"In commenting on the substance of the proposal, (D) stated that he felt that this enlargement of SUPRAD was the only way in which the organization could go. He felt that the major criticism of SUPRAD in the past had been that it had limited itself to working with privileged communities, and if the University were to become involved in the total process of education, it must follow the course outlined

in the proposal itself. He raised the question of central concern to _____, and to the other schools as well, that of whether the Center would actually have and use the full-time resources available to it rather than the part-time, marginal use of resources that has been the practice in the past. In particular, he wanted to know whether the Senior Faculty members of the Graduate School of Education would commit their time, efforts, and energies to the work of the Center.

In responding, (E) pointed out that...the proposal was written by faculty members themselves and is centered on their research and development interests. This is in contrast to the way in which the Center proposal could have been written, which would have been to have someone prepare it and then seek faculty commitment to a pre-ordained, pre-initiated set of actions and goals." (March 20 , 1964)

V. Minutes of Executive Committee meetings

(Note: Each letter is not attached to a particular person, except within a given excerpt.)

"(A's) main question regarding these projects was: do we fund isolated projects or make another approach? He said he would prefer to see the overall picture before the Center began funding isolated projects....

(B) pointed to the absence of a political scientist on our faculty, stating that he felt a need for some focus on political aspects of school systems and organization. This could play a large role in the dissemination area of the Center....

(C) raised the question as to whether this really dealt with the Center's focus on learning and individual and cultural differences." (November 17, 1964)

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"(A) suggested that there should be further discussion of the clinical facilities, perhaps at a future Program Seminar.

(B) said it was his feeling that the clinical facilities would grow naturally as the proposals came in. The question in his mind was: Do we talk about the facilities before we have the proposals or vice versa?" (December 1, 1964)

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"Before considering other projects on the Agenda, there was a discussion about the rationale for supporting certain kinds of curriculum projects, i.e., projects which involve only one type of children, or projects which are directed at 'all' children. (A) raised the question as to whether the Center, with its basic commitment to the study of individual and cultural differences, should support projects which do not have a built-in bias toward the problem of reaching groups and individuals of very diverse backgrounds.

(B) asked the question: Does each project have to be multivariate in nature?

(C) expressed his feelings that he would hate to exclude good proposals, simply because they were not aimed at a variety of groups.

(D) said that in his conversations with Commissioner Keppel, Mr. Keppel had said that these centers would be general purpose laboratories for educational development. He stated that he assumed there would be no problem regarding the specific purpose of each project as far as the U.S. Office of Education was concerned.

(A) said he was not so much concerned with the Office of Education reaction, but with the internal problem of maintaining a coherent policy and program of objectives.

(E) suggested that the Center should carve out certain areas on which it would sponsor research and then adopt a policy for each area. He felt that a policy would evolve and that the Center should be pragmatic regarding decisions." (January 12, 1965)

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"(A) reported that...the (B) proposal (Note: from a teacher) was naive, but they felt that there was enough merit in the approach to warrant investigation.... He emphasized that this proposal and (B) fit into the teacher-researcher model. (A) said he favored the idea of giving a teacher a chance to work out his research ideas at Harvard. He felt that Mr. (B) was a bright young man and added that his proposal should not be judged with the same expectations as those submitted by University personnel....

(C) said he was sympathetic with the general idea, but he was uneasy about testing the idea in this particular way....(D) agreed with (C), stating that the Committee had nothing to compare the proposal with. His question was: Is this the best the Center can do as far as teacher-researchers are concerned?...

(E) raised the question: How many teachers in the five participating school systems could come up with something equally as good as (B) if given the encouragement needed?

(C) moved to table the (B) proposal until some discussion could transpire about patterns for funding such proposals. The following specific items were mentioned that should be discussed: What should be the criteria by which the Committee decides which individuals are to be supported as teacher-researchers? To what degree should this type of project tie in with the focus of the Center on educational differences? The possibility of this type of project, with focus on the teacher-researcher, should be made known to all partners in the R & D Center.

(F) suggested that this be treated as a matter of urgency."

(January 26, 1965)

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"The questions were raised: What criteria do we use for bringing another community into the Center? What precedent would the Center set by admitting another school system? How many partners can the Center realistically include?

(A) suggested that there were two things that should be considered: (1) What new kinds of children would be added from this school system which would offer a broader range of children on which to do research and development, and (2) Is there evidence of aggressive leadership on the part of the community?

(B) raised the question as to whether the Center considers itself a service organization in this geographical area, or has the Center set certain goals and purposes and will the Center direct its attention to these goals?

It was agreed, after further discussion, that there was a need to have a meeting of the Executive Committee and representatives from the Policy Board to discuss policy for the Center, on this and other general matters. The date of June 3 was set for an all-day meeting of the

Executive Committee, plus representatives from ESI, WGBH, and N.A.I.S. to discuss Center policy." (May 11, 1965)

VI. "The Next Few Years of the R & D Center: An Executive's Speculations" Prepared by John Herzog for the June 3 all-day Executive Committee meeting.

"Monographs, journal articles, even supposedly 'popularized' books, have been pretty ineffective in reaching classroom teachers and school administrators. There is no reason to believe that written documents, of the widest variety, and given even the special imprimatur of the R & D Center, will have any greater impact on school practice than their predecessors have had. To adopt a metaphor which I heard used at a recent ESI conference, the 'pipeline model' simply does not work...

I propose that the Center choose, as one of its major, long-term projects, the problem of 'dissemination and institutionalization of educational innovations.' ...First, I want to suggest that in the future we make strong efforts to see that research, demonstration, and dissemination aspects are built into all proposals and projects which we support....

The second tactical step which I advocate...is enthusiastic support for the development of the already established Clearinghouse....

Third, I would like to see the Center push forward on the basis of at least one hypothesis about dissemination, which makes sense to me and I imagine to a number of the Executive Committee members, to the end that a 'dissemination facility' be established in the near future.... My 'hypothesis' is that effective dissemination can only be accomplished when: one, real teachers can see in operation for extended periods of time the proposed practice, and feel free to criticize it and to propose adaptations for their own situations; two, when these same teachers, having decided that there is something worthwhile to be learned, are free to practice the new routine in a maximally supportive and relaxed environment; three, when they are able to return to the 'real school world' and maintain regular, informal contacts with teachers who have been exposed to and practiced the same innovations that they have, and thus can share with them their new interest and continuing problems; four, where continuous, non-evaluative help is available to them as they attempt to carry out the innovations in their own classrooms."

VII. Special Policy Meeting

"The first matter discussed was the question of whether the Center should focus its resources on large, long-term projects, or continue the present practice of funding smaller, disconnected projects of high quality. Unanimously, it was agreed that certain broad areas for research and development should be selected, and that the Center's efforts should then be concentrated on long-term, relatively expensive programs relative to them.

The question was raised as to whether the focus of the Center on such programs would lessen the influence and involvement of the schools and other Center partners in the Center's activities. Would the University be taking the initiative from the partners and 'using' them when the need arose?

The Committee recognized that a policy of concentration of resources into larger programs would make the Center less responsive to the routine interest and problems of its partners. The Committee agreed that long-term projects would be of greater eventual benefit to the schools than bits of isolated research or local 'crash programs' which might be carried out under the alternative strategy....

The feeling was expressed that the non-University members of the Center do not really feel a part of the Center. Some sort of mechanism is needed to involve the partners in the Center's work. It was pointed out that an intellectual relationship is desirable, and that this will not develop by itself.

One form of intellectual support suggested and approved by the Committee is the provision of administrative and scholarly assistance to Center partners seeking outside support for worthwhile projects which are not eligible for Center funding. The 'research and development directors in the schools,' plus an appropriate administrative officer of the Center, were assigned this function by the Committee....

The Committee also concluded that it will be important, during coming years, to attempt to develop the potential of the position of the 'research and development director in the schools.' These appointments may break new ground for the nation as a whole. Further, the fruits of Center projects and programs will be appearing during the next two or three years, and it will be important for the cooperating school systems to have 'agents' appointed who can disseminate these results as quickly and sensibly as possible."

Conclusion

Having finite resources to draw on, the Center is caught among competing atrategies and emphases. How can its financial and human resources best be used? Moreover, what sort of Center do those who shape policy really want? Some of the models, emphases and needs in competition are:

(1) a downward-flow dissemination model, in which knowledge or new materials are created by small groups of specialists and disseminated out--or down--to large numbers of school people; versus the encouragement and support of indigenous, often unsophisticated attempts at innovation together with attempts to make the general school climate more conducive to change (Variants of 'Type B' research might offer a middle ground here)

(2) an emphasis on active intervention in complex, uncontrolled situations versus an emphasis on sustained research and development under highly controlled conditions in order to establish dependable, rigorously evaluated results

(3) an emphasis on making a difference soon and nearby, versus an emphasis on making a difference in the long run over a much broader area

(4) the need for autonomy for individuals, projects, and institutions, versus the need for cooperative effort and genuine interdependence

(5) the desire to become deeply involved with the inner city versus the desire to work under more desirable, freer conditions in the affluent suburbs

One could try to divide all those I interviewed into little factions on each of these questions, but it seems more accurate to say that in general, people are often divided within themselves. I make this generalization after listening to many statements of the form "I believe that ultimately the really firm progress will be made through carefully designed and documented research, but..." or, 'We want very much to work in an urban setting, but...' Since the Center cannot be all things to all people, policy-making involves setting forth priorities and emphases. It does seem, however, that even though these are difficult matters on which many people have mixed feelings, the main thrust of Center policy to date does not accurately reflect the sum of the expressed desires and criticisms of the policy-makers. This not uncommon organizational phenomenon has no

'sure cure,' but may be amenable to a flexible and searching treatment.

Given all the differences in perspectives, goals, emphases, remedies, etc. that have been presented, and given the gap between actual policy and an assessment of what people seem to want, the application of formal "theories of change" to the affairs of the Center is certainly problematic, and probably premature. Earlier this fall I did moderately extensive reading on 'the diffusion of innovations,' 'dissemination,' 'planned change,' 'community self-help,' and other catchwords summing up an approach, or a group of approaches, to change. I felt that the theories were quite helpful in sensitizing me to certain concepts and problems. However, theories and strategies of change alone will not solve any of the Center's problems. Prior decisions and commitments have to be made before the subtleties of a particular strategy can be useful. The strategies and theories have implicit value components and can not--or should not--be divorced from socio-political and psychological realities and ideals.

For instance, suppose we were to try to change the attitudes of principals to make them more receptive to certain innovations. Is the literature on attitude change helpful? Not to the researcher who characterized this idea disparagingly as "a product-selling model... You soften up the buyer to make him buy your product." Suppose we want to introduce a new curriculum and are undecided as to how much emphasis to put on dealing with administrators, and how much with teachers. Is theory helpful? Shall we consult the extensive literature on the diffusion of innovations, which emphasizes the role of the superintendent, or read Brickell's Organizing New York State for Educational Change, with its heavy emphasis on the key role of administrators? Not if we share the views set forth in this memorandum:

> "Now if curriculum development people see their products as replacements for a body of subject matter, i.e., a reshuffling or rearrangement of the items in a sequence, in say math, and concerned with communication between the learner and his subject, then you have one view of purpose. It is narrow, as I see it, and can be talked about in management-marketing distribution concepts and vocabulary. That probably accounts for administrative people being of first priority in one's dealings with the schools.
>
> If, on the other hand, the curriculum materials are viewed as oncorporating in their use major modifications of classroom style,

> toward the model of the self-directed and individualized styles of work with children, then you have another view....The enclosed articles ....will provide considerable documentation for our thesis that the greatest good, in both the long and short run, will come from dealing with teachers."

This is not to say that theories and strategies for change, based on thorough analysis of the characteristics of schools and the systems with which they interact, should not influence a wise policy; however, at a more basic level, commitments and goals precede the adoption of procedures for bringing about change. Moreover, one organization can use many procedures effectively so long as procedures grow out of the particular goals they are designed to implement.

I hope this intermediate report will stimulate reactions among those who read it, and will be very glad to receive memoranda, letters, suggestions for further interviewing, reading, visiting, etc. It is intended as a constructive rather than a negative document, perhaps in the same way that a plunge into cold water makes you feel more invigorated after you get out. There seemed little point in disguising the candid and sincere reactions of those most deeply concerned with the Center's future in guarded and colorless language.

I have deliberately left the report very open-ended. Perhaps it will help to crystallize opinion and increase discussion of long-range policy so that recommendations incorporating a wide range of opinions into a coherent plan will be possible. During the spring semester, I plan to continue reading and interviewing, and probably to look into the possible philosophical underpinnings of some of the viewpoints expressed. Once again, I should like to thank all those I interviewed for their cooperation, and to express the hope that my work this year will prove of some usefulness to the Center.